



Save the Earth Day & Month Special Edition

Many of us who spend significant time outdoors see the coming of spring each year as others embrace New Year's Day — a time for fresh starts and new beginnings — and in this case, by way of pastel flowering trees and jewel-colored blooms underfoot. For those who associate through the Forests of the Ardens, this year's springtime not only welcomes the brilliant and sassy chartreuse buds overhead, but also **the return of *LEAF, the Living on the Edge of Arden Forests* newsletter**. We are fortunate that our former editor, Jill Althouse-Wood, is still with us as an important (and hopefully frequent) contributor, and whose role in leading the **Arden Club Gardeners Gild Earth Day Vegan Feast** will close out our Earth Day activities on April 22 (see page 3 for details and how to register). And, just in time for our **Save the Earth Day Clean-up!**, we welcome a new team of woods workers to the Forests of the Ardens collective.

(continued on Page 2)

Five Ways to Celebrate Earth Day this April!

Wild Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 15, 10 a.m. at the bottom of the Candlelight Theater parking lot

Make the Most of Your Compost!

Arden Club Gardeners Gild
Monday, April 17, 7:30 p.m. at the Arden Gild Hall

Save the Earth Day Clean-Up!

Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m. at the Buzz Ware Village Center
10 a.m. Ardentown meet-up at the bottom of the Candlelight Theater parking lot & Ardencroft meet-up at Pauline Young Park

Arden Club Gardeners Gild Earth Day Vegan Feast at the Arden Dinner Gild!

Saturday, April 22, 6 p.m. at the Arden Gild Hall- adgreservations@gmail.com or call 302.792.7139 by 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 16

Arbor Day "Dog-wood" Tree Planting Event

Saturday, April 29, 11 a.m. at the Buzz Ware Village Center

I hope you will join us in **welcoming Lisa Surbrook, Scott Bowers and Ariel Gruswitz of the newly-formed Ardencroft Forest Stewardship Special Committee.** We look forward to “getting to know” each one and their vision for their new committee in a future edition of **LEAF**. But, for now, let’s get to the “news” and focus of our relaunch and special edition — Earth Day! **Many thanks to all of our Gild and Committee partners who are working together to celebrate this year’s Earth Day all month long! Hope you will join us!**

Arden Forest Committee

Beverly Clendening & Carol Larson, Co-Chairs
Jessica Colgan-Snyder, Eric Reed & Lisa Wolfe

Local Expert to Advise How to Make the Most of Your Compost!

Please join the **Arden Club Gardeners Gild on Monday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Arden Gild Hall for an evening of learning how you can make the most—and the most of your compost!**

Did you know food waste makes up 25+% of Delaware’s landfill materials? The Delaware Community Composting Initiative (DCCI) offers education programs and provides technical assistance to communities, like ours, to help reduce overall food waste and divert scraps and wasted food from the landfill, turning it into nutrient rich useable soil.

Brigid Gregory, DCCI’s Program Director will be leading the in-person informational session. Her talk will include the basic elements and important considerations in making quality compost from start to finish, including preparation, temperature, turning contents, the right balance of “greens” to “browns,” and choosing the right bin.

Find out how you can make your own, “black gold,” Arden compost tea. Questions? Please reach out to Hajni Halasz at 787serendipity@gmail.com.

Save the Earth Day Clean-up!

Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m. at the Buzz Ware Village Center

10 a.m. Ardentown meet-up at the bottom of the Candlelight Theater parking lot & Ardencroft meet-up at Pauline Young Park (formerly the Buzz Ware Playground)

Every Earth Day we all provide a little extra “love” to the Ardens' forests and streams with our annual clean-up. **We'll start the day at 9 a.m. with coffee, hot chocolate and sweet treats at the Buzz Ware Village Center then span out to cover all areas of the Ardens.** If 9 a.m. is too early, Ardentown folks can meet-up at 10 a.m. at the bottom of the Candlelight Theater parking lot. We'll pick up trash streamside and then you'll be rewarded with a walk to view some spring wildflowers! Also at 10 a.m., Ardencroft folks can join the Ardencroft Forest Stewardship Special Committee at Pauline Young Park.

Do you know students seeking community service credits? Earth Day activities count! We'll be looking for weight estimates for all of the trash collected to report to the Christina River Watershed Cleanup conducted throughout our area. Since the Cleanup began in 1992, more than 360 tons of tires, appliances, household items and other trash have been cleared from within the watershed. Last year, our efforts added nearly 300 pounds to that total!

And NEW for this year – just for participating -- you'll be included in a FREE raffle! Got weeds? If you win, you'll receive a visit from the Arden Forest Committee for an hour of weeding! Multiplied by the four members -- that's FOUR HOURS of FREE WEEDING! You'll also be entitled to trade your filled black garbage bag for a FREE PLANT!

No need to sign-up – just show up! Need more information or to sign-up a student? Just email forest@arden.delaware.gov.

Time again for the Earth Day Vegan Feast at the Arden Dinner Gild!

I am not vegan. I am not vegetarian. I am not even flexitarian. But I am exploring more ways to eat a more plant-based diet. It is better for my health (I've seen the results in my blood tests) and better for the planet. I am also a foodie and creative home cook who likes a challenge. You may know about my chili-making prowess from the Arden Swim Gild's Chili Cook off. I won the top prize three times. But it is the third place I earned making a vegan chili that I am most proud of. Last year, for Earth Day, I co-lead the Gardeners Gild/Arden Forest Committee dinner for Dinner Gild with an all-vegan menu. We did a falafel dinner that sold out. We had lots of positive feedback on the meal and learned a lot in the process. Who knew you could make whipped topping from aquafaba (the liquid from a can of chickpeas)?

While we may revisit that dinner another year, I like the challenge of coming up with new menus to inspire the greater community with the range of possibility that exists in a plant-based diet. This year on Saturday, April 22 our crew will be making **Pasta Primavera with a veggie-filled, garlic cashew sauce**. The dinner will also feature a **bruschetta bar with creative vegan toppings** and a **spinach salad with strawberry poppyseed dressing**. To top it all off we will offer a dessert of **orange olive oil cake**. We will have a gluten-free option for the pasta for those who let us know in advance. We will cook 120 dinners and take reservations until we sell out. **Reserve early so you don't miss out. The dinner (open to the public) is Saturday, April 22 at 6 p.m. \$12 for Arden Club Members, \$15 for non-members. Kids 12 and under eat free in April. For reservations, email adgregreservations@gmail.com or call 302.792.7139. Specify if you want gluten-free option or if your dinner will be takeout. Takeout orders will be served starting at 6:20 p.m.**

Aquafaba (Vegan) Whipped Cream

Ingredients

3/4 cup aquafaba (liquid from canned unsalted chickpeas or white beans)
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar or lemon juice
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup vegan powdered sugar (most organic varieties are vegan)
2 tablespoons neutral-flavored oil like canola or refined melted coconut oil

Instructions

Drain and save the liquid from a can of chickpeas or white beans. Pour 3/4 cup of the liquid in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Using a mixer, beat the liquid until it starts to get foamy. Add cream of tartar and continue to mix for 5 minutes on high until it becomes very fluffy and forms stiff peaks. Add vanilla extract and continue to beat for another minute. Slowly add powdered sugar while continuing to mix on high until all vanilla and sugar are mixed in and the mixture is very fluffy. Mix for a total of 9-10 minutes for whipped cream that will hold its fluffiness the longest. Turn off mixer and add 2 tablespoons of your choice of neutral oil. (Melted if using coconut oil). Turn on mixer to low and beat for 5 -10 seconds to get the oil distributed. (Do NOT over mix once the oil has been added or you will lose the fluffiness.)

Notes

Make sure to beat the aquafaba for the suggested time or longer before adding the oil or your whipped cream will separate and lose its form. You can leave out the oil and make this whipped cream fat-free!
Any white bean liquid can be used.

Enjoy!

Watch for upcoming editions of LEAF for recipes from the 2023 Earth Day Vegan Feast!

By Jill Althouse-Wood
Arden Club Gardeners Gild

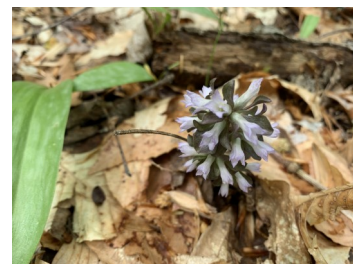
Wild Wildflower Walk

At the March Arden Club Gardeners Gild meeting, Ardentown's Elaine Schmerling led us on a virtual tour of wildflowers in the Ardens' natural lands — showcasing 83 blossoms including spring ephemerals, perennials and shrubs, mostly from her photographs from over 20 years of walking and working in the woods to save these plants. **On Saturday, April 15, Elaine will lead a special spring-time wildflower tour with a little garlic mustard pulling and clean-up on the way. Meet at 10 a.m. at the bottom of the Candlelight Theater parking lot.**

You'll see some, like Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*, pictured upper left), have their own pollinator insect that they have co-evolved with! Spring beauty and trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*, top right) are common plants that most woods walkers are familiar with—and are now in bloom.

During her talk, Elaine showcased some less common plants that the average walker may not see, some that she has seen only by removing invasives.

Did you know that we have four “Uncommon” (S3 status) plants in Delaware? Two of these, Hepatica (*Anemone americana*, lower left) and Virginia pennywort (*Obolaria virginia*, lower right) have only been found by pulling invasive plants from a few areas in the Ardentown woods. The Pennywort has now expanded on the left side of the main path where we started pulling garlic mustard and Norway maples, 20 years ago! These plants are known as allelopathic plants—plants that are toxic to many of our native plants. In fact, garlic mustard has been well studied for its toxicity to mycorrhizal fungi. In researching for her talk, Elaine discovered that the Pennywort depends upon mycorrhizal fungi to grow! It's shallow roots get important nutrients through these connections. Hence, 20 years after removing the plants that are toxic to the fungi they depend upon, they are now thriving! But, only in these few



areas which we have spent years and hundreds of hours, manually clearing.

Want to learn more about the less common and “Uncommon” plants in our woods? Then join Elaine on April 15 for a wonderful wild wildflower walk!

Arbor Day “Dog-wood” Tree Planting Event

Doggone it! Arbor Day has gone to the dogs! Dogwoods, that is. Please join the Arden Forest & Civic Committees in honoring our four-legged forest partners in an **Arbor Day Tree Planting Event at the Buzz Ware Village Center on Saturday, April 29 at 11 a.m. We'll have special treats crafted for our canine friends and we'll also have hot beverages and sweets for their woods walkers.** Did you know the common name dogwood comes from one colonial description of the fruit as being edible, but not fit for a dog? The fruit is unusual because it's high in calcium unlike a lot of other berries -- important for Arden's birds! Who knew? Don't miss this very special way to close out Earth Day month!

LEAF is brought to you by the Arden Forest Committee on behalf of the Forests of the Ardens collective. For additional information and copies of this newsletter, please visit arden.delaware.gov/committees/forest-committee or the [Forests of the Ardens Facebook](#) page. To contact us, email forest@arden.delaware.gov